



May 04, 2026 10:00 A.M.

## PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

TELECONFERENCE: 219-803-8769 PIN: 160 #500

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ahs-epsf-aep>

- I. **MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:20am**
- II. **ROLL CALL:** President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, Grazing Officer Moore and Geneva Begay with Red Willow Farm.
- III. **INVOCATION:** President Elvis Bitsilly
- IV. **REVIEW OF THE AGENDA**
- V. **COMMUNITY REQUESTS:**

1. **Andrea Jackson** – I'm requesting for a septic system installation at my new home.  
**President Bitsilly** – Our CSC, Maria can provide you with information on the process of getting a septic system. She has applications or she can refer you to an organization who can assist.  
**Laris Manuelito** – IHS just released \$6 million for septic system and water line upgrades. The community can take advantage of this.  
**Presenters: It's campaign season:**
2. **Rochelle Garnenez** – Candidate for Magistrate Judge, Division One. She is from Mexican Springs. Requesting to be put on the Chapter meeting agenda.
3. **Gilbert Manuelito** campaigning for **Darryl Bitsoi** – Candidate for Council Delegate for District 14. Requesting to be put on the Chapter meeting agenda.
4. **Cody Jansen Anaya** – Candidate for Council Delegate for District 14S. She is from Coyote Canyon and states these words are important part of her platform; anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, elders, and veterans. These are areas she is especially focused on and interested in hearing from our communities and your experiences and how we can get better. I have a breadth of experience and worked at two national laboratories as a Manufacturing Manager and Senior Operation Analysis. Ten years ago, I served our communities as Miss Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial (2013-2014). She is interested in serving the community and hearing our voice and working with the Navajo Nation leadership, State Representatives, and federal partners to make sure our communities get the services and resources that we need. The primary election is on July 21<sup>st</sup> and she would appreciate your vote. She requests to be put on the Chapter meeting agenda for May 20<sup>th</sup>.  
**Grazing Officer Moore** – All the campaign posters that are put up on the fences along 491 are being taken down by the NM Department of Transportation. So, don't put your campaign signs there.  
**Cody Jansen Anaya** – Who do I ask to have a poster put up across from the Post Office?  
**Gerald Moore** – That would be me, and yes, you can put a poster there along with all the other posters.

### **REPORTS:**

**Laris Manuelito** – Requesting to have the Veteran's report moved up as soon as possible. There some things I want to bring to light that the community should know. To get the community's input into the discussion.

**President Bitsilly** – I would like to keep the agenda as is with no changes.

**Vice President Rodgers** – We are by law under Title 26 to have our agenda posted 48 hours in advance. We all have each other's email addresses so we need to learn to communicate.

### **\*Council Delegate's Report given by LDA Moore:**

1. **2026 Navajo Nation Spring Session updates** –

**LDA Sonny Moore** – Our biggest challenge for the past 2 weeks was the closure of Twin Lakes

Chapter because of mice droppings and other things that weren't working inside of the chapter. So, I caution the staff here, make sure your fire extinguishers are up to date and exiting signs are working. The chapter was initially shut down by OEH.

As far as the Senior Citizens, I encourage our chapter to assist our Senior Center because we have all new staff working. I will follow up on the new HVAC that was suppose to be purchased by Aging and Long-Term Care Support Department in W/R. The roads in our community also need to be addressed and Tohatchi Chapter did receive some funding for roads. It was mentioned at one of the meetings the purchase of bulldozer for district 14. We started out with a funding of \$3 million and now we are up to \$5 million per chapter and we could use some of that money for the highway lighting.

Everybody knows about the fighting between the Navajo Nation Council and the President's Office and the plans to move the FRF office away from DCD and put this office under the Controller's Office. Then they are wanting to combine the OMB Office with the OOC Office to hopefully streamline the processes.

Also, chapters across Navajo received \$6 million for emergency funds and Tohatchi chapter will be receiving \$35,000.

**Priscilla Duncan** – You sent us an email stating there was ARPA funds available at NTUA for community members who still need utilities, water, and septic systems. I know there was an NTUA meeting, and I'm wondering if they decided how they were going to spend down the ARPA funding.

**LDA Moore** – This is what I know about ARPA, there are around \$347 million. Now from the latest Controller's account it's at \$78 million and they have not decided what they are going to use it for. Two of the biggest spenders are NECA and NTUA. They are both under a time line now because of the upcoming December 2026 deadline. In the meantime they are deciding which projects can be completed by the end of the year and how much will have to be returned. With that, the Controller is still thinking of hardship but it won't go to everybody. They are deciding on what population will receive hardship checks. Also, there is the \$24 million that is still missing, but President Nygren states it's not missing. It was given to Ingenious Design. So, Ingenious Design has plan to sue Zenni Homes. To answer your question, I don't believe NTUA can do anymore, but there is the RRR funds in the amount of \$521 million. There is also NECA and OEH who may have funding for the septic system projects.

**Priscilla Duncan** – The individuals who received homes, did I hear it was a package to include utilities, water, and septic system for their new homes or is the family's responsibility?

**Maria, CSC** – When we met with DCD office, Mr. Dalgai said it was a complete package for these new homes for the families. Everything is included but when Grandpa Badonie and another family received their mobile homes, they went to NTUA to get their utilities, water, and septic system and they were told the cost would have to come out of their own pockets. So, I'm working with Carissa to get information on how she got her community together and who came out from NTUA and took the applications for these families. Carissa shared some information with me and I've contacted these individuals from NTUA and ask them to come out to Tohatchi Chapter to meet with these 3 families.

**LDA Moore** – That is why I'm saying it's not part of the package. There may be some money with "light up Navajo" for both house wiring and electric. I don't believe water is included. Carissa tapped into the light up Navajo funds to get the utilities and septic system for her community. You'll probably need to contact Louella Chee or Bernadette Kee with NTUA.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – LDA Moore, that's probably something you can assist with as far as making connections with these two individuals.

**Andrea Jackson** – Does Tohatchi Chapter have a website where the community can login or share information?

**Maria, CSC** – We do have a website but it takes a lot of concentration daily to keep the website up to date and maintained. We don't have anyone or have a position available just for a website tech. Currently, we are just updating the meeting dates, agendas, and meeting minutes from month to month. We need someone with an IT background.

**Andrea Jackson** – How long do you keep the videos from your cameras?

**Maria, CSC** – 5 days.

**Vice President Rodgers** – When we met with Mr. Dalgai, he gave us a run down on the cost of each mobile home with that the chapter was only able to receive 3 homes. There will be some funds leftover and we asked Mr. Dalgai to split amount the 3 families to help with the cost of utilities which includes water. By the time we got to the cost of septic tank installation, this required the coordination of IHS and OEH. Unfortunately, what was leftover was not enough to cover a septic system for each family.

**LDA Moore** – Since election season is upon us again, district 14 would like to schedule a meet and greet forum for all the candidates running for office in district 14. There will be a meeting Wednesday evening at Don Diegos in Gallup to discuss when and where this forum will be setup.

I like to mention that the Tohatchi Chapter is the most transparent in how they present their financial reports. I can't seem to get the other chapters to follow in Tohatchi's financial reporting. Maria and staff, I want to encourage you to stay after that audit and on our way to getting certified.

**President Bitsilly** – On the San Juan Water Project, we are short by \$4 million. When I was in Twin Arrows, I spoke with Tarek and he said the \$31million which is at Water Resources is still there. Out of the \$31 million, we are earmarked for \$3.9 million to connect Tohatchi and Mexican Springs. I hope Delegate Notah or yourself can follow up on that. Danny Simpson is the Council Delegate who drop this legislation. There was also another pot of money that Delegate Crotty had for water project. These are the two water projects on the New Mexico side.

**LDA Moore** – The chapters work under Title 26, right now they are doing public hearings across Navajo on the proposed Plan A and Plan B. Plan A says to certify all 110 chapters across Navajo, Plan B says to continue the way we are operating currently and let the chapters certify themselves. Eastern Navajo is already working with Plan A and they want all the chapters to get certified. These options have to have 56 chapters' approval before it becomes law. So, the chapters will be voting on one of these options soon.

**President Bitsilly** – At the intersection of highway 491 and Route 9 to Coyote Canyon is where the water plant is located. This is where the lateral project is going to connect and it will run to Tohatchi and Mexican Springs. We need the funds to connect to this water line.

**\*Community Service Coordinator/Officials' Report:**

1. DNR EXPO 2026 Highlights:

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I attended the Expo and it was nice because Mr. Halona, Division Director had his whole departments there from the Department of Natural Resources. They were available to answer all of our questions. Presentations were given to all-in-one room, but they had booths setup outside and people to answer your questions. I received information on grazing permits, homesite leases, and pets and animal control. I wanted to know if you can add another person to your existing homesite lease? Answer is yes and I also asked about RMUs and how they work because my aunt had a RMU which she gave to her granddaughter.

**Vice President Rodgers** – What I took away from the Expo is if you require a home renovation and

bathroom addition we are given just to December 31, 2026 to get this completed without a homesite lease. I found this interesting because one of our audit findings was one of our home renovations done since the legislation was made in the time line that it was done was counted against us. I made a point of that because it should not have been applied. Also, now days we have technology and smart phones which livestock owners are using to chip their cows' ears to keep track of them. So, when your cow is being removed from your area, it will beep on your phone to tell you the cow is being removed. Each department gave us progress reports under President Buu Nygren's administration and it was very encouraging. They stated we were able to do so many homesites compared to the past because we streamlined this and that. It was very exciting to hear all the numbers of projects that have been completed over the past year using ARPA funds. A lot of us just look for the \$24 million that is supposedly missing, it's not missing there is a paper trail. They will find it and someone will be liable. So be careful with being scam with information and do your research. My take away was all the new policies which are in place now and it was a refresher course for me.

**Grazing Officer Moore** – For homesite leases, we do have forms that you can use to transfer to avoid probates. To obtain a homesite for a home that is already in existence since the 1980's can get a homesite lease processed a lot quicker. As far as the livestock premises ID is concerned, it is mainly for the livestock that go through the auction, to a pasture, onto a feed lot, and onto the slaughtering plant. If they find disease cow, they can trace it back to the owner by the premise ID. They have chips for cattle, sheep and even horse can be chipped. I don't know if you have heard of virtual fencing, where they can control cattle in a certain area without a fence. The cows were a collar and is maneuvered by a smart phone and GPS system. When cow leaves the area, the cow will receive a shock or beep to make it turn around. You have to train them so they can train the other cows to follow.

I had mentioned earlier about grazing permits on hold. The BIA has a project going currently called the Agricultural Resource Management Plan. This means the BIA will be doing some surveying across Navajo regarding vegetative studies. This will determine the stocking rate for example; in a 10-acre lot, how many cows or sheep can it take care of as far as grass/vegetations. Is that for 1 day, 1 month, or 1 year. The grazing permits which were issued back in the 1940's still have the same number of sheep units to this day. The BIA study may be completed by 2027 and all the permits that are on hold currently will see a decrease in sheep units based on the vegetation study being conducted. Tohatchi community; in 14-2 has 133 permittees, but doing tally counts I only see 35-40 permittees. What happen to the remaining 90 permittees. So, I'll have to reach out to BIA with a list of the 90 permittees who they need to contact because these individuals have not had a tally count within the last 10 years. Should we just cancel them?

**Andrea Jackson** – Who or do you offer the chipping service for sheep? Also, where do I apply for the bathroom renovation?

**Grazing Officer Moore** – On your sheep, you can get the premise ID tags and have a regular ear tag as well. They should also have a metal ear tag (scrapie) for breeding. I do not provide the chipping services.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – Each chapter received funding for bathroom renovation or additions but we have not heard from W/R as to when this project will begin here in Tohatchi. I know other chapters have already started or completed their bathroom additions and renovations. We should be following up on this pending project.

**Sheryl Wood** – I work for the State of New Mexico and they do have resources for bathroom additions or renovations for elders and people with disabilities. We are located in Gallup and we do assist the Navajo Nation Veterans. They will build walkways and walk-in showers, and handicap ramps.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I'm wondering if these services can be provided if a person lived in a

mobile home. The home renovation and how do they apply?

**Sheryl Wood** – Yes, but it depends on their disability and what the individuals needs. The address is at 6300 East highway, next to the Income Support Division on the eastside of Gallup.

**LDA Moore** – I keep hearing that names are still being taken for bathroom renovation. Our chapter from here came up with additional names. NECA is the one who is doing renovations.

**Mae Fern Dennison** – Since we are talking about renovations, I would like to request to have the stucco on my house re-done. Are there restrictions?

**President Bitsilly** – You would have to see Maria, CSC for applications and guidelines to apply. The chapter can only assist you every two years. She can explain the resources and steps you need to take.

2. 1<sup>st</sup> Responders Safety Complex status –

**President Bitsilly** – This is a huge project; the design is being completed by LAM Corp which they stated was 60% complete. The total cost of this project is around \$16 million. Dr. Greyeyes with the Department of Corrections has applied for State TIF funding requesting for \$12 million. Tohatchi Chapter hosted the Law & Order committee meeting here at the chapter and their priorities are the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder facilities across Navajo. I like to make it clear that we are a model project for all of Navajo to use as a template. We have received a million dollars and \$50,000 from State Capital Outlay funding.

3. N108 Bridge Project status –

**President Bitsilly** – This project is currently going through the 164 process and there is \$4.6 million to complete this project which NN Transportation Department will be applying for. It will be a 2-lane bridge with a sidewalk for pedestrians.

4. 110 Chapters Emergency Assistance \$6 million -

**President Bitsilly** – This funding was approved by Navajo Nation Council and will be going to each chapter across Navajo. This funding will be used for preparation for emergencies. We will have an expenditure plan in place when we receive the funding.

**Andrea Jackson** – Will this funding including re-striping the road within our community; for example from the Post Office to the clinic and down to the Speedway Store?

**President Bitsilly** – The loop here is a BIA road and I did speak with Mr. Clarence Tsosie about finding some funds to repair and stripe the road around the loop. Mr. Tsosie did state they only do the maintenance portion of the roads.

5. Unhealthy food tax fund –

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I did print some copies of what we can spend our unhealthy food tax money on which I googled. On our last financial report, we have over \$103,000 in unhealthy food tax funds and we need to start talking about we want to use that money. So, I'm asking the community to put on your thinking caps and let us know how you want to spend the money.

**Laris Manuelito** – I've asked for a wellness center and a new senior center using this fund about a year ago so we need to work on land withdraw and everything it entails. This would start at the CLUPC meeting and I've been to the CLUPC meetings requesting but it's up to the CLUPC members to start the process.

6. Rural Addressing –

**Maria, CSC** – We've received the supplies to install the signs. I'm working with them to schedule a training for 4 community members who will be hired to install the signs through our community. I believe this should only take a month to complete but the installation should start this summer.

**Mike Begay** – How far out will the FedEx or Amazon go to deliver packages to homes.

**President Bitsilly** – An example would be to Lucinda Barney's residence off dirt road 9653 because they will have a house number as well.

**LDA Moore** – On another subject, we have one chapter in preparation of the RRR funds. We have a lot of projects, house wiring, leach field replacement, and others. I'm thinking about the audit and the coordinator. Remember one of the findings was we did not do a good job with our projects under the housing discretionary funds. I think it would be a good idea to hire a project coordinator, of course this would have to go through Maria and her boss Patricia Begay and also, we would need the funds to pay the individual.

**\*Red Willow Farm Report:**

**Geneva Begay** – We are currently working with Water Resource who came out and leveled out some farm plots. There are a lot of sand dunes and shrubs in the area and the people from Water Resources were a bit cautious on trying to level these areas. So, next year we will know what type of equipment to request for. There also was a grant available for solar projects, but we missed the deadline, but now we are prepared and looking at other grant opportunities. We have the diversion dam funding in the amount of \$467,000 and we had a contractor come out and we are waiting on a bid but have not had a response. The Tohatchi diversion dam which was cleaned by the chapter heavy equipment operator, Mr. Eugene Watson. He did a very good job with cleaning out the dam. I would like to say thank you to Mr. Watson. We do have farmers who want to plant this year. We did mention to them that they will need water tanks to water their crops this summer. There is 3-inch hose connected to the irrigation box and the old irrigation is a 16-inch height which our elders used to irrigate. But today, we find it difficult to farm even though we have the equipment to make our job easier. Every year is a new experience for us, the trial and error. So, we put one foot forward and do our best farming. A good part of it is conservation planning, going out there and taking pictures of the vegetation to see what type of plants are growing. We look at how drip line farm and can benefit the farmers.

I also want to mention on May 5<sup>th</sup> we will be planting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> raise bed garden and we are inviting all the elders to come out and plant with us.

**Andrea Jackson** – You had visit me at my home regarding the canal. What is the update on the canal?

**Geneva Begay**- We drafted a proposal with the assistance of Theresa Henio and it was sent to Mike Halona. Mike signed off on the proposal and then it went to Hazel James and it goes up the chain of command to Keisha Tatum and she looks for funding for the project. We would eventually like to get Fish & Wildlife on board to coordinate with them.

**LDA Moore** – Just to mention we have met with Mr. Mike Halona regarding complaints about the storage tanks, loading points not working, windmills, and dams. They seem to be responding to our requests. Sooner or later we need to address the embankments that come off of Red Willow and we have that all on a map.

**President Bitsilly** – There is \$467,000 earmarked for the diversion dam for the restoration project.

**Andrea Jackson** – What determines the amount of water each canal gets when the monsoon season starts up?

**President Bitsilly** – The canal is being monitored to try to get equal amounts of water flowing in the canals.

**Vice President Rodgers** – We've been holding off letting water run into the lake because we were hoping to get all the shrubs growing removed. There also endangered birds (species) living among the trees and shrubs at the lake. The cleanup will have to wait until these birds move out which should be seasonal.

**Geneva Begay** – There is a doctrine in place with the BIA which will cover damages caused by the diversion dam.

**Delphine Bitsilly** – I attended the Expo in Twin Arrows as well and President Nygren brought up some interesting points as far as farming and I asked him to come visit Red Willow Farm. The farm has a water tank and a water pump. I mentioned the pipes need to be replaced and I also mentioned Chooshgai Lake and all the shrubs and unwanted trees. President Nygren says he has never been to Red Willow Farm or the Lake and he put it on schedule to come visit RWF and the lake.

**LDA Moore** – What is the process on the eradication?

**Geneva Begay** – Ashley Curley has taken over this project. \$200,000 is coming in annually. We also have Nathan Sam as our district 14 representative and he did mention the BIA finished with the BRCF and got approved. So, now we can get our permits issued out to our farmers.

**Laris Manuelito** – I'm working on a collaboration with western agency farmer and northern. I'm working on an initiative for the food to table part. We are looking for famers who want to do commercial farming. We currently have 6 farmers that we are working with.

**\*CLUP Report:**

**Priscilla Duncan** – We met last month and had someone from W/R come out to review our Manuel that we have been working on. She said there is a timeline as to when this Manuel should be completed

and our secretary is doing all the work on the Manuel.

**Delphine Bitsilly** - The Manuel is called the Community Land Use Plan.

**\*Senior Center Report:**

**Evangeline Muskett** – We were shut down by OEH for 2 weeks because of the reoccurring deficiencies which includes the HVAC and the fire extinguishers. I've been letting my supervisor know about the deficiencies but it was until we were shut down when things started moving. Thank you to the chapter for assisting with the fire extinguishers. These were the two critical items that need to be addressed. I did complete a corrective action plan which was very beneficial. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, OEH came back to do another inspection and the center was opened back up on April 20<sup>th</sup>. So, come in and have lunch, we provide lunch to individuals age 55 and over.

This Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be doing a Mother's Day luncheon and I also want to mention the Twin Lakes Senior Center will be having a Older American Month event on May 14<sup>th</sup> at which time our Senior Center will be closed so that we may attend this event. There will be song and dance and other activities so please come out and join us for this event. I'm still working on getting Mexican Springs and Coyote Canyon Senior Center reopened. I was told to get quotes for the major stuff that we need for the centers. I'm being pressured by my supervisor to have the two centers back opened.

I'm glad our center is opened again, I felt lost for 2 weeks while the center was closed. As a reminder, lunch is served from 11:30 to 1pm.

**Laris Manuelito** – Would you entertain the idea of starting the process for a new senior center.

**Evangeline Muskett** – Not right now, I'm fairly new to this position.

**Caroline Tom** – Is the base field behind the senior center being utilized? I would recommend relinquishing the land and consider expanding the senior center.

**President Bitsilly** – Yes and no. The school did utilize it for practice at one time, but since they got a new base field, I have not seen anyone using it.

**\*Grazing Officer's Report:**

Current grazing updates – Mr. Moore gave his updates earlier in the meeting.

**\*Veteran's Report:**

**Laris Manuelito** – I'm the current Vice Commander for the Tohatchi Veterans organization. I want to bring some things to light and I want the community's input on because we came to a stalemate at our veterans meeting. It is important that veterans and veteran's family come to these meeting so we can get your input. Our current veterans are elders and I want to take care of them. Last year, the veteran's administration gave us funding and was moved to the chapter and there were discrepancies as to how we can use our budget. This is from the Veterans Administration Trust Fund and just to name the 3 main line items: gift and awards, catering, and stipends. It's a great honor to host a Ft Defiance Agency Veterans' Council which will be on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day before Independence Day. Mexican Springs Veterans Organization held one last quarter so it's very rare that NM chapter veterans can host these things because there are only 5 chapters in Ft. Defiance Agency, the rest are in AZ. So to have 2 held here in District 14 is unheard of. The discrepancy came when Mexican Springs was able to use their funding for catering service for their Agency meeting. Our request to our chapter was hit with stonewall and sent to DOJ for question. We don't know why, something about chapter policy and how it is written. So, we were stuck not knowing what to do next. We have to plan these things, make sure to get 3 quotes, and make sure everything is in order. Now we have to wait to get this clarified by DOJ. I don't know why it has to go to DOJ for interpretation. It is in the veterans' budget for the catering but we are told we cannot use the catering services if we will be feeding other chapters. So, LDA and Council Delegate were called to try to clarify this. This is not the only time we were held back from using our funds. Last year we were held back from using our funds for other aspects. I called the Veterans Administration and they said it's not in our hands; we gave it to the chapter. I like to know what the thoughts of the community is on this situation. The one-chapter official and the CSC were really eager to say; no you can't use it. We have \$6000 in our catering that we need to use by September and we have

other aspects that we will be using it for. So, I asked the administration again, what policy did Mexican Springs were able to use for their veterans to use their catering? If we can get the same language and have the veteran's organization asking the administration and the officials to work together to collaborate so if it's a policy change, we can make that change. But when it comes to campaigning, it's all about the veterans.

I also want to bring to light is we are having a District 14 stand down. Down stands are very important because it brings services from outside to the veterans. To have one at our community base level is almost unheard of and this is our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual. It is going to cost \$3,338 for catering and each chapter in District 14 will be responsible for about \$668. How is Tohatchi veterans going to pay their share if we are already being held back using our catering? Last year we had the same issue and Tohatchi chapter was the only one who didn't pay for the stand down for their veterans. The official watched as the elder veterans who were on fixed income passed around a hat to collect the \$400 and the last \$200 was covered. Is the chapter going to help the veterans this year with the stand down?

We have funding for gifts, awards, and office supplies and we do need a printer. We decided to build a binder for our veterans for the next fiscal year. For Memorial Day, we want to do breakfast and let the other chapters know who fold flags, we have a certified honor guard who trains annually in Albuquerque on how to fold flags which includes retiring flags. I'm part of that honor guard as well. On Memorial Day, breakfast will be at 7am and at 7:30am we will go to the cemetery to play taps and do the 21 guns salute and then we come back to fold flags. Afterward, we want to get steaks and have a cookout at the Veteran's Park. The class of 1974 came together to clean up the Veteran's Park here in Tohatchi. This all involves money for catering.

**Andrea Jackson** – Do Tohatchi and other chapter veterans officers meet where you would have already known how beforehand where Mexican Springs Veterans budget went through and Tohatchi Veterans budget is being held up? How can we all get the budget passed. Who is the chapter official you are talking about? And who referred this budget to DOJ? I believe the veterans would prefer to have a stipend and use their stipends for projects at home.

**Laris Manuelito** – If it is not improved, the last resort is to move our stipends over to pay for the cost of these events. We do have communications with other chapters and what we didn't know is running into this issue with our funds and I'm talking about President Bitsilly the official. President Bitsilly and the CSC, Maria made the call at the veterans meeting to get a hold of DOJ. They used the audit as the reason to get DOJ's approval.

**Andrea Jackson** – Was it sent to DOJ for interpretation of the policy?

**Laris Manuelito** – To be honest, that's what it looked like.

**Rudy Anaya** – Have you received anything in writing justifying their decision to send it to DOJ? Who at DOJ is handling this request?

**Laris Manuelito** – Nothing in writing, it was all verbal besides our minutes.

**President Bitsilly** – Tohatchi Chapter is under a corrective action plan and we did not go to DOJ because it's a veteran's issue but because of our corrective action plan which we are working to correct. We are taking precautionary measures on any issues with the chapter because of the audit. When we starting pointing fingers and stating names and their duties and responsibility, we need to be careful. We are doing our job here and I do respect the veterans and Vice Commander; you know I attend your meetings. So, we are being careful with the veteran's budget here at the chapter. The budget was at the agency office but now it's been moved to the chapter and the chapter is responsible for the monitoring of the veteran's budget. Myself and the administrative did not say no to the veterans for requesting funding for catering. We are just being careful when it comes to our chapter audit. Any time there is an

issue which needs further interpretation, we have access to the Department of Justice who can assist us in these matters. I recommend the Vice Commander sit down with administration and go through the process again just to make sure everything is being handled correctly.

**Laris Manuelito** – I am Vice Commander of the veterans and we didn't cancel or reschedule our meetings. The chapter did due to a death in the family who wanted to use the chapter, so we didn't have a choice. You cancelled it for us and we had to reschedule on our own. So do make it like we are cancelling and rescheduling our meetings.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – Point of Order

**Point of Order was called again for a second time.** Secretary/Treasurer Crawford had to remind Ms. Manuelito that point of order was called.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I would like to hear from our CSC, Maria to explain how the veteran funds came about and what the issues are with veterans using their funds?

**Maria, CSC** – I have a letter dated December 15, 2008 from the Navajo Nation Department of Justice. It explains the disbursement of the veteran funds under resolution CF-06-08 and CM8-09-00. This funding was given to all veteran organizations across all 110 chapters on Navajo. It explained what was covered and it started with food; it will cover the food for their meetings, birthday parties, and veterans' dinners for instance; Memorial Day dinners. The other things it covers is gifts and awards. When the organization wants to recognize their members or other branches of the military or if they are retiring, they can request for funding under gifts and awards. But funding covers only the members who are registered with the Tohatchi Veteran Organization. A recent memorandum was issued to all chapters which states catering and operational supplies are now available. Operational supplies would cover things like paper, pencils, folders, binders, and things for their events like paperware and decorations. Veterans' organization can now request for funding to pay for catering services. The other is catering and before the food could only be purchased and cooked here at the chapter by the chapter staff, but now it has expanded and veterans can take advantage of catering services away from the chapter. For example; hosting a luncheon at Firerock casino. Number one, the food funding is only used when they are having small events here at the chapter. The catering funding would be used if the veterans wanted to have a Christmas party at Firerock. But I still insist on getting 3 price quotes for the catering funding. If the chapter will be providing the food, I will ask for 3 price quotes. If we are going to buy decorations and paperware, I still require 3 price quotes. So currently, the veteran's organization is hosting an agency meeting and I had to get clarification because when this funding came to the chapter, I was told this funding are only for the Tohatchi Veterans Organization. So, if they want to do an agency meeting, there is another fund called the "Agency Veterans Organization" in Window Rock. This funding is the funding the Tohatchi Veterans should be using for their Ft Defiance Agency meeting. I talked with our Council Delegate and his LDA, I also spoke with my boss, Patricia Begay. I went even further to talk with Roderick Begay with DOJ just to make sure we were going to be using the correct funding for this event. I'm the one who will be answering to the auditors so I want to make sure the veterans are using the correct funding. I'm not saying no, I'm just making sure it's done right. I also have 2 veterans from here who are saying no. They believe the money should be used for the Tohatchi Veterans only. And that is another reason I wanted clarification from DOJ since I have 2 people who are against these plans.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – It sounds like we also have to determine where the funding is going to come from, is it going to come from the chapter or is it going to come from Ft. Defiance Agency depending on what type of party or celebration it is going to be?

**Maria, CSC** – No, we do have the funds. We just want to make sure if the chapter is going to do the

catering, it will come out of the veterans catering service funds which has \$6000.

**Laris Manuelito** – For the record, I heard you say it is okay to use the funds, but now we are going back to we are waiting for Roderick Begay's responds. My question is how Mexican Springs able to use their catering for their event, and does it have to be questioned audit or no audit?

**Maria, CSC** – Because this is a different situation and we are under an audit. I did ask the CSC from Mexican Springs and she stated that it was the officials who approved it not the CSC. So, she didn't sign check, it was the officials.

**Laris Manuelito** – It's our money that is paying for this event, not Maria's money. It's coming from our funds, let's get that straight. We are fighting with our own officials to spend our money. Yes, you sign the check because it's here and we have other events coming up so we need to get this resolved.

**Maria, CSC** – You do have two veterans who are against using their funding for this event. In the meantime I'll wait for DOJ's response.

**Laris Manuelito** – We voted on it and the majority said they were ok with it.

**Andrea Jackson** – With the cookout being planned at the Veteran's Park, are you taking donations for food or can we do a potluck where we can bring a dish?

**Laris Manuelito** – Yes, that's fine. This is a special event for Ft. Defiance Veteran's Council, like I mention it's only happened at Mexican Springs and here. It's my fault for volunteering the chapter before asking the chapter or without thinking that the chapter would be willing to help us. Next time I'll be a little more clear with that because I thought our chapter would be right in line with us for hosting such an important event.

**Fern Spencer** – How many veterans do you have in your organization now? How many of them come to your meetings?

**Laris Manuelito** – We have about 18 veterans, and about 10 surviving spouses, I think we have 3 gold blue stars. They pretty much all come to the meetings.

**Fern Spencer** – During Earth Day, Rosie was the only one here representing the veterans and she had to call on her "1974 committee" to help her clean up the Veterans Park. That park was given to the veterans to use is my understanding, but it's not. Nobody takes care of it. One time when I was still teaching, I asked the chapter if my student council could take care of the up keep of the park. Money is tight and I remember Alice Plummer kept a good record of all the members. Maybe you need to contact each one of them to let them know what you all are doing now instead of waiting for them to come, because that's not going to happen.

**Laris Manuelito** – The membership has been minimal and we are trying to push younger members to come in using social media. We did talk about fencing the park and getting more table and making it nice.

## **VII. RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Un-table resolution **033-04-2026**. Approving a budget transfer within Fund 25, Navajo Nation CIP Funds in the amount of \$6,965.90 to replenish repair and maintenance construction equipment and Chapter renovation.
2. Un-table resolution **035-04-2026** Resolution approving a budget transfer within Fund 01, the General Fund in the amount of \$1,494.56 to cover the negative balance for other Professional Fees and to add line-item waste disposal collection.

**VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** District 14 Grazing Meeting will be on Wednesday at Naschitti chapter at 9am. CLUPC meeting next Tuesday, May 12th at 9am at Tohatchi Chapter. Red Willow's meeting tomorrow.

**Laris Manuelito** – If we can get a letter stating a request to use veterans fund has gone to DOJ and the reason why and giving it to Friday to find the resolution so we can start planning.

2026 Primary: tomorrow May 5th is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of voting, May 16<sup>th</sup> expanded early voting begins, May 19<sup>th</sup>

last day to request for absentee voting, May 30<sup>th</sup> last day of early voting and June 2<sup>nd</sup> election day.

**President Bitsilly** – You can make that request for memo and letter to Maria. Veterans meeting next month in June. The chapter has a Mother's Day fun run on Thursday at the chapter. Registration will be at 5pm and the run at 6pm.

**IX. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: May 20, 2026 @ 10:00am**

**X. ADJOURNMENT: 1:20pm**

Submitted by;

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jean Crawford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jean Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter – March 15, 2026

cc: Mr. Elvis Bitsilly, President

Ms. Lee Rodgers, Vice President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC

Mr. Nathan Notah, Council Delegate